

Fifty Applications Received for CIRM'S New Cell Lines Award

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SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., February 8, 2008 The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) today announced that it has received and accepted 50 applications for the New Cell Lines Awards. Thirty-eight applications were received from non-profit organizations and 12 from for-profit companies.

The CIRM New Cell Lines Awards will fund up to 16 awards of up to \$25 million to support the derivation and propagation of new lines of pluripotent human stem cells that will have important research and clinical application for understanding, diagnosing and treating serious injury and disease.

The Awards will support two categories of research and will give particular consideration to research that cannot be currently funded by federal programs:

- Derivation of new human embryonic stem cell lines using excess or rejected early-stage human embryos generated by *in vitro* fertilization.
- Derivation of pluripotent human stem cell lines from other sources using alternative methods such as, but not limited to, somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) or reprogramming of neonatal or adult cells (iPS cells).

"We are pleased to have received applications to support research across the spectrum of approaches used to derive pluripotent stem cell lines," stated Alan O. Trounson, president of CIRM. "Advances in new technologies such as induced pluripotency, while promising, are in their infancy in terms of being able to drive therapies and cures for disease and injury. Therefore, to ensure that research moves forward in all of the areas that have potential to deliver medical advances to patients, these grants will fund the derivation of new cell lines from both the well-established means of human embryonic stem cells, which remain the gold standard for research into pluripotent cells, as well as new technologies."

Pluripotent stem cells have the potential to play a key role in developing stem-cell based therapies because of their unique ability to renew themselves and their potential to form almost all of the cell types of the body, including muscle, nerve, heart and blood. Human embryonic stem cells remain the gold standard for research into pluripotent cells, because they currently provide the only means of producing pluripotent stem cells that are genetically unmodified. As such, derivation of new human embryonic stem cell lines is a priority for both basic and translational research that could be the foundation for advancing new therapies and cures. Human embryonic stem cells are typically derived from a hollow microscopic ball of cells called a blastocyst that is typically four or five days old.

Review of applications by the Grants Working Group is anticipated in April of 2008, with review and approval by the Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee (ICOC), CIRM's governing board, projected for June 2008.

About CIRM:

CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 156 research grants totaling almost \$260 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

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